

---

EERE Regional Office Stakeholder Update -- June 2006

---

This newsletter is intended to keep stakeholders of the U.S. Department of Energy's Regional Offices (ROs) informed during this period of transition to a consolidated organization under the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's (EERE) Project Management Center. See information at end if you wish to be removed from distribution. If you are unable to view or print the newsletter, a PDF version is available online at <http://www.eere.energy.gov/regions/consolidation.html>

---

Featured articles

---

- \* Consolidation updates
- \* EERE to implement new program/project split
- \* IPO chiefs talk about their view of the future
- \* House takes first steps on FY07 budget
- \* Closeout date for RO web sites approaches
- \* RO employee updates

---

Consolidation updates

---

Reminder: The Golden Field Office is planning a combined meeting for the three western regions (Midwest, Central and Western) August 1-3 in Golden, Colo.

---

EERE to implement new program/project split

---

A current and projected shortfall in program direction funds has necessitated a change in the project management reporting relationships between Golden and NETL. Under the previous plan, the two organizations would each be responsible for a set of programs, and their project officers would be located at both Golden and NETL, each managing projects within the western part of the country or the eastern part.

Because fiscal year 2006 program direction funds, the funds which pay for such things as salaries, travel, utilities, etc., are tight this year and are projected to be tight at least through fiscal year 2007, EERE had to make some difficult decisions to cut costs. One of the decisions made was to eliminate the split in project management between Golden and NETL. Under the new arrangement, with a couple of

exceptions, Golden will be responsible for nationwide project management for all its program, and the same will apply to NETL.

Golden's and NETL's program responsibility is as follows:

Golden

- \* Hydrogen
- \* Biomass
- \* Solar
- \* Wind and hydropower
- \* Geothermal
- \* Industrial technologies
- \* Native American energy
- \* Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP)

NETL

- \* Freedom Car, including Clean Cities
- \* Buildings
- \* Weatherization Assistance and State Energy Programs

The major exception will be the State Energy and Weatherization Assistance Programs. While NETL will continue to have program responsibility for them, project management will be split between the two organizations.

"We expect this arrangement to be more efficient and effective in addition to saving money," said Rita Wells, EERE Deputy Assistant Secretary for Business Administration. "We've also taken great care to ensure no employees will be impacted any more than they already have been by the consolidation."

-----  
IPO chiefs talk about their view of the future  
-----

By Jack Jenkins, Golden Field Office

Jack is a long-time employee of the Central Regional Office who will transfer to Golden as part of the consolidation. He recently interviewed Gary Burch, Golden's assistant manager for intergovernmental projects and outreach, and his counterpart at NETL, Angela Young. Both have been around DOE a long time and are intimately familiar with the work the Regional Offices carry out. The following is what they had to say about what service to stakeholders is going to look like with the implementation of the new EERE field organization that goes into effect July 1.

Angela:

I think the first thing to remember is that even though our organizational structure is changing, our stakeholders will be working with pretty much the same pool of regional office (RO) staff they've been working with all along. Most of us who will be in the two new Intergovernmental Program and Outreach offices are from the ROs, and we have always been customer focused. This is not going to change; we're still going to be customer focused.

Service to our stakeholders is what matters; it is part of what we have always prided ourselves on. It is a big part of what our new organizations are being built upon.

Gary:

Throughout this year-long process of change, we have repeatedly said that we will maintain our same level of service to our stakeholders. Now that the day of the actual change is almost upon us, we want to do even better. We want to improve our level of service to our stakeholders. That's what this reorganization will ultimately be all about: making EERE a better partner with whom to do business, streamlining the way we interact with our customers so that we can better fill their needs.

Angela:

After the announcement that the regional offices would be consolidated with the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) and the Golden Field Office, the regional office staff had to make some difficult professional and personal decisions. We've now made those decisions and from what I can tell, people are eager to move into the new positions and new phases of life.

We're working to build an organization which will provide our stakeholders with the high level of service they need and deserve. At this point, it is creating some uncertainty among stakeholders, but it's important to think of it as opportunity, too, an opportunity for reinvention.

In the beginning there may be some glitches, but once everything settles, hopefully the glitches will soon disappear. Everyone involved in this change has put a lot of work into having things go as smoothly as possible, and the staff within the new organization is making a real commitment to make the new organization as good as, hopefully better, than the old one. We are dedicated to continuing to work directly with all our stakeholders and to doing so in a more efficient and more effective manner.

Gary:

The substance of our outreach work is really not going to change; neither is the frequency of our contacts with our stakeholders. What will change is how we maintain that contact.

Travel budgets remain tight, but mission-critical travel for such things as monitoring and training will continue. For example, we hear from stakeholders that they need training on WinSAGA and on Grants.gov. What I want to say to stakeholders is "we hear you," and we're going to do whatever we can to get you the training you need. WinSAGA will continue to be the primary system for quite a while, although we do see an increasing use of Grants.gov on the horizon.

I think we could see more travel for monitoring, but for other types of outreach, we will be relying more on technology; we'll use phone contact, e-mail, webcasts and videoconferencing more than previously. But for those events and situations where face-to-face meetings or on-site visits will be needed, we will make every effort to be there.

Angela:

Each of the two offices, Golden and NETL, will have a full-time states coordinator who will maintain on-going contact with the states. Julie Riel will handle this responsibility at Golden and James Ferguson for NETL. For matters concerning the individual program areas, project managers will continue working with stakeholders.

Gary:

In many cases, these project managers will be the same people you have worked with for years; but in other programs or areas, they will change. We are still working this out and the situation will become clearer as people actually settle into place during the latter part of this month and first part on next month.

Angela:

For on-going information flow, the Project Management Center (PMC) website and the GO and NETL websites will become even more important than in the past. (See links below.) Stakeholders should be sure to check them; they will be good places for us to quickly get new information to everyone. We may also continue the stakeholder newsletter, if people find it useful. We've done some informal phone interviews about this in the last two weeks, and are finding as more people learn about the newsletter, the more they turn to it for information updates.

Gary:

Realistically, there's no question that as we move forward in the next few months, we'll have some speed-bumps, but we'll do our best to minimize them. And one of the best ways to do this is for our stakeholders to tell us, loud and clear, when things aren't working as well as they could. But we'd also appreciate it if they let us know what procedures work well.

Angela:

Our relationship with stakeholders is a partnership, and we all need to remember this as we move through this change over the next few months.

From our viewpoint, moving toward one way of doing business with EERE is a move toward improvement. We also know that to make it work, we will continue to have to make some changes in the way we operate, changes in the way we interact with our stakeholders, changes in business procedures and in the tools we use and provide. For example, you're probably going to see changes coming in the metrics used for measuring the success of the State Energy Program. I think most stakeholders would agree that is a good thing.

We know that making these changes will require some adjustments on the stakeholder side as well. We want to work closely with them to make these adjustments as smooth as possible, while at the same time maximizing the lasting benefits.

Bottom line: through all of this change, it remains our job to stay focused on the mission of promoting the use of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies by working with our stakeholders through grants and partnerships. We want to keep processes as simple as possible and to remain focused on being good stewards and providing great customer service.

Gary:

Managing grants, along with the required financial and technical reporting, is mission-critical. In-the-field monitoring is mission critical. Training is mission critical. Technical assistance is mission critical. We will continue to provide these services at the same or improved level that our stakeholders have come to expect. And we will work hard to provide you with even better, more efficient, effective service in the future.

Websites:

EERE Project Management Center  
<https://www.eere-pmc.energy.gov/>

Golden Field Office  
<http://www.eere.energy.gov/golden/>

National Energy Technology Laboratory  
<http://www.netl.doe.gov/>

-----  
House takes first steps on FY07 budget  
-----

The House has passed the fiscal year 2007 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill, beginning a lengthy process that normally will culminate in a signed appropriations bill probably sometime in the fall.

The House succeeded in boosting funding for some DOE energy conservation programs, adopting, 217-204, an amendment to restore \$25 million for state energy grants, which an earlier version of the bill had zeroed out, and agreeing by voice vote to further increase energy efficiency programs by \$5 million.

At this very early stage in the process, the bill contains some pluses and minuses for EERE, including an increase overall for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs compared to the administration's request. That increase would restore funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program to its FY06 level. On the other hand, the markup zeroes out geothermal research.

The important thing to keep in mind is that it is far too early to tell whether these items in the House's version of the bill will make it into the final bill sent to the president.

-----  
Closeout date for RO web sites approaches  
-----

In preparation for the July 1 consolidation of the six regional offices (ROs), the existing RO websites have now been closed and archived. Much of the content has been integrated into the following EERE web pages:

- \* State Partnerships and Activities
- \* Financial Opportunities
- \* Consumer

Contact information can now be found on the National Energy Technology Laboratory and the Golden Field Office web sites. Other resources and funding and business opportunities can be found of the EERE Project Management Center web site. See web links above.

-----  
RO employee updates  
-----

\* Central Regional Office

Nothing to report this period.

\* Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

Nothing to report this period.

\* Midwest Regional Office

Nothing to report this period.

\* Northeast Regional Office

Stephen Costa, Industrial Program project manager and State Energy Program project manager for New Hampshire, accepted a position with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center. Stephen departed DOE May 26. Please contact Greg Davoren at 617-565-9706 with all questions about the Industrial Program. Sapaletto Seymour is available to answer any SEP New Hampshire questions and can be reached at 617-565-9704.

\* Southeast Regional Office

Nothing to report this period.

\* Western Regional Office

Correction: In the April-May issue of the newsletter, we said that Kim Penfold, contact for bioenergy/biomass programs and Clean Cities, had resigned from federal service. Actually, she has taken a job at the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

=====  
The EERE Regional Office Stakeholder Update is both confidential and dedicated, in that the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy will not disclose names or emails addresses to anyone nor send you e-mails unrelated to this newsletter.

If you have not already subscribed to the newsletter, you may by emailing: [rostakeholders@go.doe.gov](mailto:rostakeholders@go.doe.gov).

Likewise, if you wish to withdraw at any time, you can unsubscribe by emailing the same address.

